

Prohibition

IN

Canada and the United States

It would be about as necessary to prove that the "sun is hot" or that "the world is round" as to prove that Prohibition is a failure, were it not for the persistent attempts of the Prohibitionists to delude people, who have neither the means nor the time to look into the matter carefully, into believing that Prohibition is a success and that therefore it would be a good thing for Canada.

The people of Ontario had a taste of Prohibition in the Scott Act, and a bitter taste it was. It is acknowledged by every unprejudiced man who had any experience of the operation of that law, that of all the legislation obtained by the opponents of the liquor traffic, the Scott Act proved the worst failure and the most bitter disappointment to thousands who voted for it, honestly believing that it would abolish drunkenness and crime. The strongest evidence of its failure and of popular disapproval was its repeal in every county, generally by majorities much larger than those by which it was carried. And statistics show that the judgment passed by the electors upon the Scott Act, after every attempt had been made to enforce it, was a sound judgment. Not only did the convictions for drunkenness increase during the Scott Act period, but convictions for crimes and misdemeanors of all kinds also increased very materially. (See official returns for Ontario.)

Twenty-eight counties and two cities in Ontario gave the Scott Act a trial. How many have retained it. And why was it repealed? Can there be any other reason.

than that it was a failure. The memorial, signed by 300 citizens of Woodstock, including nearly all the principal business and professional men, but nobody connected with the Liquor Trade, said :

"The Scott Act in this town has not diminished but has increased drunkenness ; it has almost wholly prevented the use of lager beer, which was becoming an article of common consumption ; it has operated to discourage the use of light beverages, substituting therefor, in a large measure, ardent spirits, and it has led to the opening of many drinking-places which did not exist under the license law and to the sale of liquor being continued till hours after midnight."

And this was the experience generally in other places where the Act was tried. But it is surely unnecessary to recall at any further length the absolute failure of the Scott Act in Ontario.

PROHIBITION IN MAINE, MASSACHUSETTS, VERMONT, Etc.

Let us take the experience of Maine with Prohibition, for Maine has long been the happy hunting ground of the Prohibitionists. Maine has been trying Prohibition for 40 years, more than time enough to kill the Liquor Traffic, if the Liquor Traffic was to be killed. The Maine Prison Report for 1884, after about 25 years of Prohibition effort, says : "Intoxication is on the increase ; some new legislation must be made if it is to be lessened. In many of our counties Prohibition does not seem to affect or prevent it."

Gail Hamilton, the result of whose investigations into the working of Prohibition in Maine appeared in the *North American Review*, said :—"The actual result is that liquor is sold to all who wish to obtain it in nearly every town in the state."

Gail Hamilton also says :—"You can get bad liquor for bad purposes in bad places, but you cannot get good liquor for good purposes in good places."

The *New York Sun* detailed a special correspondent to investigate in Maine, and he reported :—"In no part of the world is the spectacle of drunken men reeling along the streets more common than in the cities and larger towns of Maine."

The late General Neal Dow himself complained of the number of low drinking places that infest the cities of Maine.

Maine's record of drunkenness, idiocy and crime is a complete answer to all the alleged benefits of Prohibition. Ask any observant visitor what he saw in Maine.

Take Vermont next. Prohibition has had a fair trial in Vermont where the Legislature piled one enactment upon another, heaped up penalties and at last gave the police power to enter any house without a warrant in search of liquor. The result is reported by Mr. Edward Johnston in *Popular Science Monthly*. He says :—"For all practical purposes the law is an absolute dead letter."

Massachusetts also tried Prohibition for a number of years. The report of the joint committee of both Houses of the Legislature, one of the clearest and most comprehensive reports of the kind in existence, states :—"The mere fact that the law seeks to prevent them from drinking, rouses the determination to drink in many. The fact that the place is secret takes away the restraint which, in more public and respectable places, would keep them within temperate bounds. The fact that the business is contraband

and liable to interruption, and that its gains are hazardous, tends to drive honest men from it and to leave it under the control of dishonest men who will not scruple to poison the community with vile adulteration."

Kansas has given Prohibition a thorough test with most disheartening results.

A TERRIBLE INDICTMENT

Iowa has tried it, and here is what Mr. F. W. Faulkes, of Grand Rapids, Ia., once a strong advocate of Prohibition, has to say about it :

"It breeds liars. It increases taxes. It fosters dishonesty. It develops hypocrisy. It retards immigration. It drags religion into politics. It retards the growth of States. It debases many courts of justice. It disturbs peace among neighbors. It stands in the way of better methods. It makes an avocation for blackmailers. It increases the consumption of whiskey. It complicates affairs of Church and State. It is an attempt at a present impossibility. It fails to decrease pauperism, as claimed. It is falsely asserted that it has decreased crime. It retards public improvements in city, town and country. It is falsely declared that it prevents the increase of insanity. It destroys a market for vast amounts of products of the farm. It develops professional and disreputable spies and informers. It has largely increased the number of drinking places in Iowa. It does not diminish the evils of the traffic at which it is aimed. It permits thugs and scoundrels to search homes at any pretence. It is an attempt at revolution which public sentiment does not endorse. It breeds a spirit of intolerance that is inimical to American institutions. It encourages and has greatly increased the monstrous crime of perjury. It tends, in many parts of the state, to make drinking places of drug stores. It leads to the manufacture and use of vile, villainous and poisonous liquors. It is based on the false assumption that humanity can be made virtuous by law. It places power and authority in the hands of many bad and unscrupulous persons. It is aimed at the destruction of an industry recognized by all civilized countries. It has produced assassins Pierce and Potté, but never punished the red-handed murderers. It received the cordial endorsement of some of the very class of men it is supposed to oppose. It is taken advantage of by professional agitators for the purpose of self-aggrandizement and spoils. It prevents municipalities from regulating and controlling their own affairs as they may deem proper and right. It causes thousands of men to take liquor to their homes and places of business, even where best enforced. It makes cowards of political parties and prevents just and needed legislative action at times in other matters. It enables irresponsible loafers to secure the arrest of decent and innocent people, and subject them to indignities. It has lost the support of public sentiment, without which it never can succeed, for law is public sentiment crystallized. It has helped to strike down honorable judges in a dishonorable way, simply because they could not conscientiously decide cases in its favor. It interferes with the work of temperance reform, and deters it from being conducted along educational, religious and moral lines. It results in an annual drain of millions of dollars from Iowa for goods demanded and consumed in the state, but the manufacture of which is declared illegal. It enables blackmailers to bleed the saloon keepers, preventing city and county

treasurers from receiving the fund necessary, and justly due them, for expenses in looking after the traffic. It has resulted in the election of many small-bore men to the legislature—men nominated because they were professional prohibitionists, and not because of any special fitness for the position. It makes sneaks of thousands of young men who, in localities where best enforced, congregate in stables and other out-of-the-way places for the purpose of drinking, and which places are hot-beds of evil. It creates a carnival of free whiskey, enabling, without restriction or regulation, one and all, regardless of their reputation or character, who may so desire, to engage in the business of selling the beverages demanded. It has not succeeded in prohibiting the traffic; and the almost universal disregard of that law, and its constant and general violation breeds contempt for all law, a condition which, if continued, will prove disastrous."

